1: Melamid K-4 (no date) 1953 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4
Qatar MK3

Gulf of 'Oman established by the Middle East Anti-Locust Unit in 1943. Besides Trucial sheikhs and their immediate subjects, there are Bedouins, who, however, do not engage in any activity on the seas and are thus outside the provisions of the treaties. In general, the Bedouins recognize the authority of one or another of the Trucial sheikhs, but changes of allegiance are numerous. Bedouins may decide to make wars of their own, or to change sides during wars between Trucial sheikhs, which makes the political position even more complex. In recent years Bedouins have frequently attacked the motor convoys of British nationals traveling in the definite territory of peaceful sheikhs,[10] but under the provisions of the treaties there seems to be no legal remedy to stop this armed aggression, except through successful local wars by the sheikhs.

As a result of the nature of the treaties, the culture of the area, containing both Arab and Iranian elements, has been preserved practically free of any foreign admixture. Dr. A. R. Lindt,[11] a Swiss observer writing in 1939, was particularly impressed by this achievement. Slowly, however, twentieth-century influences have begun to appear. In the early 1930's Great Britain, in the course of a quarrel over oil concessions in Iran, relocated its air routes to India over Trucial 'Oman instead of Iran. Rights to land seaplanes at Dibai and landplanes at Sharjah were acquired, and maintenance crews and other personnel were permanently stationed there. To ensure safety during local wars, overnight quarters for passengers, with permanent armed guards, were established in a fortified compound near Sharjah. Landing fees, levied according to the number of passengers, were payable to the sheikhs in whose territory landings took place. These landing fees constituted a large part of the revenues of the sheikh of Sharjah, whose only other income is derived from a tax on pearling, which is hard to collect.[12] During the war, rights to make emergency landings on the island of Yas were also acquired by the British government. Today, larger planes can fly directly from Bahrein to Karachi, and little use is made of the landing rights on the Trucial Coast, so that the sheikhs' revenues must have decreased substantially. The introduction of the motorcar has also had a marked effect on the local economy. Traffic from inland oases and the Gulf of 'Oman to the cities on the shores of the Persian Gulf is important, though no statistical data are available.

The presence of oil had been suspected since the beginning of the century, but the inaccessibility of the region together with its uncertain political status

[10] O'Shea, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[11] Politics in the Persian Gulf, *Journ. Royal Central Asian Soc.*, Vol. 26, 1939, pp. 619–633.
[12] O'Shea, *op. cit.*, pp. 76 and 140.

with the greatly-extended air services which had developed since those early days.

The radio officer came and reported that he had received the 'all clear' from the flying-boat. We locked up the rest-house, dismissed the serangs, and crowded into the two station wagons which were to take us the ten miles to the Fort. It was a tight squeeze, with bearers and clerks sitting on each others' knees in the back seat, but since transport is scarce in the desert, I found this was the customary way of travelling.

There was a track of sorts, beaten out by the wheels of countless vehicles, which wound its way around the sand dunes and the date palms. In hot weather the desert is as hard as a macadam road, and one can drive almost anywhere, but in the season of the rains flooding is frequent, and once you get stuck in a soft patch nothing less than a four-wheel drive truck with a crane will get you out. So we stuck to the road and did a fairly comfortable thirty miles an hour through the most monotonous country I have ever seen. Fortunately the rest of the desert is not like this. Between Sharjah and Dubai the landscape is as flat as a table, and the sand a dun, muddy grey, without a single bit of scrub or camel grass to relieve it.

There was little activity on the road. A flock of black goats scattered as we drove past, the young herdsman casting us a scared glance. A fat merchant on a donkey, his bare legs almost touching the ground, trotted by, a dignified expression on his face which contrasted comically with his primitive mode of travel. Away to the dunes on our left, a train of loaded camels trudged majestically towards a Bedouin encampment, their riders carrying long, silver-chased rifles. Ahead there gleamed in the sun what looked like a wide, shallow lake. Our driver made straight towards it; as we advanced so it receded, and eventually it evaporated into the air. I have often heard it said that these mirages are due to heat reflection, but an old Arab whom I knew said they were caused by the salt crystals and silicates in the sand, which reflected the sun like a mirror. Science may not accept his theory, but I have often picked up large flakes of salt from the desert which sparkled like fragments of glass.

We approached the village of Khan, a small dependancy of Sharjah, whose minarets and white-walled houses appeared to float in the air like a fairy city—again the effect of a mirage. Five more miles and we skirted a high range of sand dunes and soon glimpsed the radio masts and white, crenellated walls of our fortress home. A mile behind it the dun stone walls of the sheikh's palace

* [Between Dubai and Sharjah, ca 10 miles apart -- Rawlust